

Strategic plan

2018 - 2025



Afri 



Afri: General Information

Executive Committee:

- Laura Foley
- Dervla King
- Iain Atack
- Rob Fairmichael
- John Maguire
- Emer Lynam
- Lisa Patten
- Donnah Vuma

Patrons:

- Archbishop Desmond Tutu
- Mrs. Leah Tutu
- Denis Halliday

Afri Staff:

- Joe Murray, Coordinator (Retired August 2024)
- Katie Martin, Coordinator (Appointed September 2024)
- Larysa Karankovich (Office and Events Administrator)

CONTACT DETAILS

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**The Strategic Plan 2018-2023 has been extended until 2025 to facilitate the transition process. We have updated the Executive Committee, the Staff, and the contact details to ensure that the details are correct.*

Organisational structure

Afri is a company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital, with charitable status. Afri has a Board of Directors which meets on a regular basis to review current projects and agree future work programmes. Members of the Board of Directors are selected on the basis of their expertise and experience in a wide variety of areas (including research, policy advocacy and financial planning) and demonstrated commitment to social justice issues. Afri has full time staff and also contracts staff for Development Education, research and other projects.



Vision

Afri's Vision

Afri's vision is of a just, peaceful, equal and sustainable world. Afri seeks to inform debate and influence policy and practice in Ireland and internationally on human rights, peace, global justice, and sustainability issues. Afri particularly responds to injustice caused by militarisation, and by corporate exploitation, environmental destruction and resource depletion. We do this through analysis, education and action in solidarity with marginalised people in the 'Global South' and also in Ireland and elsewhere in the so-called 'developed world'.

Values and Ways of Working

Afri is a values-based organisation. We believe in building a culture of peace, justice and equality, at home and abroad, not as a theoretical possibility but through taking practical steps. We believe that we have a moral duty to oppose militarisation, inequality, injustice and the violation of human rights, and to stand in solidarity with those who are suffering from such abuses. We strive to do so in a manner that is direct, sustained and practical. In all of our activities, we seek to be flexible and creative and to work wherever possible in partnership with others. Afri uses an arts-based approach - utilising theatre, drama, music and other creative methodologies - to communicate and embody its message.

Core Themes

Since its inception, Afri's approach has been to identify major issues confronting our world. When Afri was founded in 1975 a major issue was so-called 'famine' (as it still is), therefore Afri chose as its primary activity to respond to that reality of global hunger. In its early years Afri changed its approach from responding to symptoms to addressing underlying causes of injustice and inequality - moving from an aid orientation/focus to a justice orientation/focus. One of Afri's early board members described it in the following terms: "If a tap is leaking it is better to fix the tap than to continuously mop up the floor".¹ When we look at today's world there are many glaring issues which we believe cannot be ignored, including: militarisation and war, climate change, food insecurity, resource depletion, homelessness, the plight of refugees and migrants, and gross economic inequality. Afri has decided to take the four areas discussed

¹Jack Hynes.

below as core themes, since they encompass many of the principal issues concerning injustice and inequality in today's world.

(1) Militarisation and Peace

Afri abhors the extent to which militarisation has become normalised in our society. A phenomenon that has caused the deaths of countless millions of people, throughout the 20th and 21st centuries alone, is somehow regarded as acceptable, and presented as 'business as usual', sometimes even among those who are concerned about issues of development of the Global South. Afri seeks to challenge this near-consensus because, apart from the death and destruction caused directly by wars and conflict, there is the further issue of the immoral diversion of resources into war and into preparation for war and away from providing for the basic needs of people. As an organisation concerned with tackling the causes of global poverty, Afri wishes to highlight militarism as a mindset, and an industry, that is among the greatest contributors to global poverty, serving corporate and geopolitical interests at the expense of people's rights. This is an issue that few other organisations in the development sector highlight.

Afri's approach is to focus on particular dimensions of this issue. These will include:

- (a) Working to end the socialisation into, and normalisation of, war, especially amongst young people;
- (b) Reclaiming the concept of positive neutrality and peaceful conflict resolution (based, in part, on Article 29 of the Irish Constitution) as an ideal to be aspired to;
- (c) Resisting enhanced European military integration and arms expenditure, with particular reference to the EU's Permanent Structured Co-operation (PESCO);
- (d) Supporting anti-war protesters and movements at home and abroad (including the International Peace Bureau);
- (e) Seeking to end the US military use of Shannon airport, including pressing for proper oversight of facilities to guard against rendition and other human rights abuses;

(f) Promoting alternative narratives and conceptualisations on how ‘terrorism’ can be countered through nonviolent, peaceful means;

(g) Participating in wider networks and alliances seeking to ban specific weapons, such as cluster munitions, depleted uranium and ‘killer robots’.

(2) Food Sovereignty

Since its inception, achieving an end to global hunger has been a constant goal of Afri. One way of bringing this about is by supporting communities and individuals in choosing food sovereignty² as against corporate-controlled, industrialised food production methods. Among the greatest threats to food security³ is the genetic modification of food and its promotion by multinational conglomerates, and corporate control of food production more broadly, particularly in relation to people in the Global South.

Afri will focus on the following:

(a) Aspiring towards the reduction of hunger and food insecurity the promotion of community ownership of food production, both locally and globally;

(b) Supporting food sovereignty initiatives in both action and education;

(c) Opposing corporate control of agriculture, including through trade and investment agreements that seek to promote genetically modified organisms.

(3) Climate Change and Climate Justice

Among the greatest challenges that confronts humanity, especially people in the Global South, is climate change. It threatens not only humanity but the very survival of the planet itself. Climate change (contributed to by fossil fuel extraction) has a negative impact not just on global food sovereignty, but also can cause conflict by heightening tensions over dwindling resources,⁴ as well as causing the displacement of environmental refugees.

²Food sovereignty is “about reliable and sustainable access to nutritious food. It encompasses the need to produce food in a manner that respects the earth, the producer, their communities and the consumers. It is a holistic, efficient and sustainable approach”: Rose Kelly, *Genetic Modification: Busting the Myths* (2012).

³Food security is an aspect of food sovereignty and can be defined as: “access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life”: Simon Maxwell, “The Evolution of Thinking about Food Security” in Devereux et al (eds.) *Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa*, South Africa: University of Natal Press (2001) pp. 15,17.

⁴For more on the links between climate change and conflict, see *Conflict and Climate Change*, produced by the Movement for the Abolition of War (2013).

The issues that Afri will focus on in this regard are:

- (a) As already referred to, we will support food sovereignty initiatives as a means of combatting global warming and climate change, including challenging trade and investment agreements such as the Canada-Europe Trade Agreement;
- (b) We will more broadly support communities of resistance to fossil fuels, including those working for a ban on fracking on the island of Ireland and beyond;
- (c) Claiming ownership of Irish natural resources, specifically supporting community ownership of energy resources;
- (d) Supporting efforts to ensure Ireland reduces its energy emissions, including by a reorientation of Irish agricultural production and trade towards a more sustainable and less globally damaging model;
- (e) Promoting, at a local level, sustainable afforestation and promoting the adoption of sustainable energy at both local and global levels.

(4) Migration, Refugees and Homelessness

A direct consequence of war, militarisation and climate change is forced migration, increased numbers of refugees and homelessness on an unprecedented scale.

Afri will respond to these issues in the following ways:

- (a) Campaigning for an end to the inhumane system of Direct Provision, to be replaced with a welcome to, and support of, refugees;
- (b) Supporting affordability and security of tenure of housing for all people in Ireland, and challenging any specious competition constructed between ‘locals’ and ‘foreigners’;
- (c) Promoting, at every available opportunity, the otherwise marginalised voices of asylum-seekers, refugees and other oppressed groups.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Board of Directors will hold regular meetings, where staff (and others) working on the various activities will report on progress towards achieving objectives under each of the above themes. There will be an internal evaluation of all activities, using the following criteria:

- Relevance for Afri's overall objectives.
- Impact: did we make a difference to/for the target group(s)?
- Effectiveness: did we achieve the objectives set out in advance?
- Efficiency: how well did we use the resources available?
- Process: were the best methods used to achieve the outcome?
- Sustainability: will the impact continue if and when Afri's involvement ends?

The first such formal evaluation will take place at the end of year 1 of this Strategic Plan, allowing for appropriate modifications to the Plan as required.



A Brief History of Afri

1975 - 1980

Afri was founded on September 1st 1975 when Sean McFarren SDB called a meeting of a group of friends and initiated the organisation under the name Aid from the Republic of Ireland. Afri's aims and objectives were to create awareness about the plight of the poor of the 'Third World' and to fund projects overseas, but also to be involved with the issue of poverty in Ireland.

1980 - 1990

The 80s began with a major re-evaluation of Afri's work. Obstacles to development, such as the political and economic relationships between the developed world and the underdeveloped world and the arms trade, were identified. The following quote from Eisenhower was cited: 'Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in the final sense a theft from those who are hungry and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed'.

There was also an increased commitment to addressing poverty issues in Ireland (the Afri office was then located in the north inner city parish of Sean McDermott Street within a marginalised community). The International Conference on World Peace and Poverty in 1982 represented the launch of the 'new' Afri, now meaning Action from Ireland. An exhibition on the effects of the nuclear attack on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was purchased and displayed by Afri. The St Brigid's Peace Cross Campaign, a symbol of opposition to the arms trade, became a national campaign in schools throughout Ireland, having been instigated by young people in Derry and launched there by Sean MacBride in 1983.

Afri's new approach involved seeking ways of linking issues in Ireland with issues in the Developing World, such as supporting the Dunnes Stores strike in 1984, when staff were sacked for refusing to handle 'the fruits of apartheid'. Afri set up a meeting between the strikers and Desmond Tutu on his way to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, which upped the international profile of the strike, as did a trip to South Africa by the strikers and their subsequent arrest and deportation. This extraordinary saga ended after nearly two years with victory for the strikers when the Irish government intervened and banned the importation of fruit and vegetables from South Africa.

The Afri newsletter Peacemaker was launched with an emphasis on poverty in Ireland and overseas. Afri was active in the campaign to oppose US President Ronald Reagan's foreign

(and protested his visit to Ireland) as well as the campaign for the release of Niall O'Brian and the Negros Nine from prison in the Philippines. During this period Afri also supported projects in Ethiopia, El Salvador, Sierra Leone, India, Brazil, Ecuador, Kenya, Guatemala, Philippines, and Chile. Afri personnel took part in preparations for the UN decade on Women and attended the 1985 Nairobi Conference on that theme, while Afri also supported and organised visits to the Greenham Common peace camp. We were active in the Nicaragua Must Survive Campaign and were involved in hosting the visit to Ireland of Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto and Vietnam veteran and anti-war activist Charles Liteky. During this period the television documentary 'Arming Ourselves to Death' was commissioned by Afri and shown on primetime television, and we also took part in the campaign to oppose ratification of the Single European Act on the grounds that it advanced European militarisation.

1990 - 1999

Afri's Great Famine Project was launched to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the height of the famine in Ireland and continued through the 1990s with walks, exhibitions, publications and the marking of famine burial places throughout the country. Among those who took part were leaders of the Choctaw nation of American Indians whose ancestors gave a donation of \$US170 for famine relief in Ireland. The invitation by Afri to the Choctaw was a way of expressing gratitude to the Choctaw for an act of generosity which happened only sixteen years after their own 'trail of tears' when half their people died following their forcible removal from their ancestral homelands in Mississippi. A plaque was unveiled in Dublin's Mansion House during their visit to commemorate this event. Other participants in Afri's famine project included Archbishop Desmond Tutu, anti-war activist Brian Willson, leaders of the Maya people from Guatemala, and journalist John Pilger.

In 1992 Afri organised the visit of Oglala Sioux Indian, Joann Tall, and Brazilian Indians as part of the 500 Hundred Years of Resistance campaign. Joann Tall visited and planted a tree at the birthplace in Kilinkere in County Cavan of General Philip Sheridan, who had risen to the rank of General in the US Army and had been particularly brutal to her ancestors among the Plains Indians. She was welcomed by members of the Sheridan family, who apologised for the activities of their ancestor. In the 90s Afri was active in the campaign to oppose the first US Gulf War and was also involved in the launch and support of the East Timor Ireland Solidarity Campaign, while supporting other campaigns such as that of the Debt and Development Coalition. Afri was also instrumental in setting up and funding Ogoni Solidarity Ireland, which focussed on the exploitation of the Ogoni people of Nigeria by their Government and the Shell Oil

Company. Afri's first Kildare Conference, now known as Féile Bríde (justice and peace conference), took place under the title 'Brigid: Prophetess, Earthwoman.' Afri staff went to South Africa for the inauguration of Nelson Mandela at the invitation of Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Afri supported organised exposure visits – mainly for activists on 'Third World' issues – to the North of Ireland. Following a conference entitled Militarisation and the International Arms Trade, organised by Afri and the Centre for Research and Documentation and held in Crossmaglen, Afri began to do research into the arms trade in Ireland. This resulted in the publication of the Links Report which identified, for the first time, companies based in Ireland that were involved in making components for the international arms trade. The report led to a campaign to end Irish involvement in this trade.

Following the collapse of the IRA cease-fire in 1994 Afri was involved in setting up and supporting The Table Campaign, which called for dialogue as the way forward. Afri also protested the JFK Warship visit to Ireland and the visit of President Bill Clinton. Afri organised events to highlight the continuing erosion of Irish neutrality, and hosted a visit by the Paez Indians from Columbia, to highlight the problems being caused by Irish company Smurfits on Paez land in Colombia.

1999 - 2004

The campaign to oppose Ireland's involvement in NATO's 'Partnership for Peace' (PfP) involved public meetings around the country and a meeting with the Taoiseach at government buildings. Afri published a document entitled 'Should Ireland join NATO's PfP?', which was widely distributed and read. Afri was also involved in the publication of Professor John Maguire's book 'Defending Peace' and a ground-breaking report 'What Price Peace?', which looked at the growth of the arms industry in the North of Ireland in the wake of the peace process. We enjoyed a great success when we campaigned to oppose the military implications of the Treaty of Nice, which was rejected by the people (though accepted when cynically re-put to the people for a second time).

Afri also hosted a number of visits to Ireland by Michael Lapsley who specialises in the area of restorative justice, dealing with the consequences of trauma and violence and healing of memories, which led to a number of workshops in Portadown and Derry based on these themes. Michael Lapsley was also part of a human rights delegation, including Afri staff, which visited East Timor just prior to the election there in 1999.

A Just a Second campaign raised awareness about the arms trade by raising the equivalent of one second's arms expenditure and using it to support projects promoting justice and peace. Afri's Development Education programmes continued, introducing themes such as the negative effects of militarisation and alternative means of bringing about conflict resolution. Afri initiated the idea of a Hedge School in 2000, which took an ancient Irish educational format and applied it to the contemporary world.

2004 - 2009

The Afri Hedge School has now been established as one of our flagship events - a symbol of refuge and resistance to past and current oppressions. Among the contributors to the School have been former Irish President and UN Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson. Music has been provided by Steve Cooney and Laoise Kelly together with the 'Tower of Babel' group (made up of students from among thirty nations represented at O'Connell Schools in Dublin).

The Hedge School has in recent years relocated to the Erris peninsula in County Mayo where a major conflict has been ongoing between the local community and Shell Oil Corporation regarding the manner of extracting gas and bringing it ashore in that remote but uniquely beautiful area. Themes such as 'From Niger Delta to Erris Shore' were taken up by speakers like Majella McCarron (a friend and co-worker of executed Ogoni Leader Ken Saro-Wiwa) and a presentation entitled 'The Goat and the Flow Station' in which Kevin O'Hara brought insights from over twenty five years of working to highlight the abuses caused by oil companies throughout Nigeria.

Choctaw tribal leader Gary White Deer presented the Second Choctaw donation to Ireland at a Hedge School, a gift of over €5000. The remarkable Sunny Jacob reflected on seventeen years in prison, many of which were spent on death row and in solitary confinement and how she maintained her strength of heart and ability to forgive throughout the long struggle to prove her innocence of the crime of which she was charged. In addition, Afri published *The Price of our Souls* (about the Erris issue) by Michael McCaughan and supported, with the French-based NGO Sherpa, a formal complaint against Shell on behalf of a local community group. The Famine Walks during this period were led by, among others, Denis Halliday, Caoimhe Butterly, Brendan Forde, musicians Sharon Shannon and Andy Irvine, Owens Wiwa, Christy Moore and Erris activists Vincent and Maureen McGrath. Said El Bouzari from Morocco was also among the walk leaders highlighting the conditions of migrant workers, refugees and asylum-seekers, a theme which was continued in an Afri Easter Monday event which was called 'Arrivals and Departures' and featured a scene in

which 'Ireland' welcomed the US war machine with open arms at arrivals, while simultaneously kicking out a vulnerable young African student through the 'Departure' gate which had been constructed outside Dáil Éireann. Sigma Huda, UN Rapporteur on human trafficking, also addressed the migration issue at Féile Bríde.

Susan George addressed Féile Bríde on the theme of her book 'How the other Half Dies'. One reason why 'the other half dies' is as a result of lack of access to safe drinking water. Following a visit to Central America, Afri supported a project entitled 'water as a human right' in El Salvador. Among the coordinating team for the project in El Salvador was Therese Osborne, who wrote the following: 'From the beginning, this project aimed at bringing the reality of ordinary people in El Salvador to the attention of ordinary people in Ireland, so that bonds of solidarity would be formed.' We celebrated our 30th anniversary together with Comhlámh and Kimmage Manor at a gathering called 'Solás'. Archbishop Desmond Tutu also joined us for our anniversary celebrations during this period. Following the 90th Anniversary of the Easter Rising, which was marked by a display of military hardware by the Irish Government, Afri organised a contrasting commemoration called 'A Show of Strength or a Show of Weakness' in which we pushed a hospital trolley (symbolic of an under-funded health service) past the GPO.

Afri was approached by the well known comedian, campaigner and TV documentary maker, Mark Thomas to introduce him to a school with which he wanted to work on exposing the issue of 'arms brokering' in Ireland. Afri introduced Mark to Sr. Barbara Raftery and together we worked with Thomas and his Channel 4 crew as they filmed students from Scoil Chríost Rí in Portlaoise, who formed the 'After School Arms Club' to highlight the absence of legislation to control the arms trade in Ireland. The project was broadcast as an hour-long 'Dispatches' documentary on Channel 4. In addition, we were involved in the formation of the Cluster Munitions Coalition in Ireland and have been supporting this campaign which resulted in a treaty to ban cluster munitions being agreed at an international conference in Dublin in May 2008. We also are members of the Stop Climate Chaos Coalition.

Afri supported the Ploughshares Group as they went through three trials, following their action to disarm a US warplane at Shannon Airport in protest at the US war on Iraq. Their ultimate acquittal on all charges was a great victory, a source of encouragement and a cause for celebration. Another victory was the defeat of the EU Lisbon Treaty in a referendum in 2008 – Afri campaigned against the militarising and neoliberal elements of the Treaty.

Afri staff were invited to address the International Peace Bureau's 'Books or Bombs' conference in Cairo. We published 'A Decade of Betrayal: The Militarization of Irish Foreign and Defence Policy' and our schools work continued with 'education for liberation' events for students throughout Ireland.

2009 - 2013

Afri recognises the extreme threat to our planet posed by the impact of global warming and climate change. We believe that this is one of the most urgent issues facing humanity and we lament the failure of Governments - dictated to by corporations whose only motivation is profit - to recognise and respond to this reality. We have added the term 'sustainability' to describe our priorities which now incorporate 'Justice, Peace, Human Rights and Sustainability'.

The activities of corporations, especially those involved in 'resource exploitation' continue to cause havoc throughout the world. For example, having supported the Ogoni people in the Niger Delta throughout the nineties, Afri soon found the issue coming home when gas was discovered off the west coast of Mayo. Quickly Shell's familiar footprints were to be found all over the Erris peninsula as they attempted to trample the rights of another community into the ground. As in Ogoni, the local community rose up in resistance and the Rossport 5 ended up in jail for nearly 100 days as Shell attempted to bully the community into acceptance of their ways. As the numbers of marchers swelled on the streets Shell backed down and the men were released but the community continued to be demonised by Gardaí, Shell and the Irish State. Willie Corduff was beaten up by masked men in the Shell compound and Pat O'Donnell had his boat holed and sunk. Afri have been proud to stand in solidarity with this brave community in resistance and will continue to support them in the trying times ahead.

The theme of the 2009 Famine Walk was 'Power concedes Nothing Without Demand' and leaders included Willie and Mary Corduff as well as Philip Ikurisi from the Niger Delta. The introduction stated that the walk was a celebration of remembrance and resistance, "remembering those who are killed or injured in resource conflicts from Ken Saro-Wiwa executed by the State with Shell collusion in Nigeria in 1995 to Willie Corduff, beaten by Shell security with State collusion in 2009. In the spirit of Frederick Douglass, the famine walk will again issue its compelling and just demands of the forces of power - locally and globally- 'Power concedes Nothing Without Demand - it never did and it never will'."

A significant moment in the history of the Famine Walk occurred in 2013 when Michael Wade (the manager of Delphi Lodge) opened the gates of

Delphi Lodge to the participants of the Afri Famine Walk. We then walked through the gates, carrying names of people known to have died on that walk in 1849, as well as names of people who have died as a result of hunger and hunger related illnesses in recent years. We planted a tree and potatoes in the grounds of Delphi Lodge in the pouring rain, as Declan O'Rourke sang his haunting composition 'Connaught Orphan'. The opening of the gates at Delphi Lodge was a momentous occasion and demonstrates, among other things, the possibility of change.

As Ireland began (of all things!) GM potato trials we highlighted the issue through information packs and by making it the theme of our famine walk. More recently as the prospect of fracking becomes an ever more likely reality Afri sought to help share the lessons of Rossport to the people likely to be affected by fracking from Leitrim to Clare and other counties besides. We have also brought the experience of other communities such as the people of Bhopal in India to bear in this context. A meeting in Manorhamilton entitled 'Bhopal - the legacy and the leaks; lessons for Leitrim' featured two survivors of the Bhopal disaster telling of their experience at the hands of the ruthless corporation known as Union Carbide. We also commissioned a film by award-winning film maker Dearbhla Glynn on this subject.

John Monaghan of Rossport was among the speakers at the 'Possibilities' event organised by Afri, Children in Crossfire and Spunout.ie in April 2011. This event was attended by over 2,000 people and was addressed by the Dalai Lama and Richard Moore as well as Rita Fagan, Ruairí McKiernan, Mary Robinson and incorporated music, dance, theatre, poetry and much more besides. It was a major achievement for three organisations to work together so successfully in organising an event of such magnitude.

Having supported a 'rainwater harvesting' project in El Salvador we then developed a partnership with the Kenya Pastoralists Journalists Network on the borders of Somalia and Ethiopia in Northern Kenya. Abjata Khalif spoke at our Hedge School in 2011 and we have worked with his organisation in promoting solar power as well as using local radio to challenge conflict in this very troubled area. This partnership continues.

2014 - 2018

Food sovereignty has become an increasingly important dimension of Afri's work - particularly as an effective response to hunger and the threat of climate change. In 2014 Afri held the first 'Food Sovereignty Assembly' in Castlebar, which coincided with the annual Afri Famine Walk in Doolough. In 2017 the Food Sovereignty Assembly moved to Maynooth, at the invitation of Dr Alistair Fraser of the NUIM Geography Department.

Afri's 'Just A Second!' campaign from the 1990s was re-imagined as an educational programme for secondary school students and commenced in the school year 2013-2014. The purpose was to raise awareness about the amount of money spent globally each year on war and war-making and invite students to come up with alternatives. As part of this programme a number of books and films were produced, including a book on drama and theatre by Pete Mullineaux in 2014, a book of stories about young peace activists by Rose Kelly in 2015 and an exploration of the Irish Famine by Dr Danny Cusack in 2017. RoJ Whelan produced a number of films for this project and others in this period.

A significant meeting was held in Trinity College Dublin in November 2013 when Afri hosted the Manning family - the Welsh family of imprisoned whistle-blower Chelsea (formerly Bradley) Manning who exposed the horrors of the US 'war on terror' - on the instigation of Ciaran O'Reilly. The keynote speaker was Gerry Conlon who gave an extraordinarily powerful address. (Gerry, tragically, passed away in summer 2014). Following that event Afri continued to support the Manning family, including the 'Manning Truthfest' - an idea initiated by Donal O'Kelly - where a number of musicians and artists travelled to Wales to show solidarity with the Mannings in 2014 and 2015. Afri was also involved, in partnership with Ruairí McKiernan, in marking Chelsea's birthday each year. In 2017 the good news came that one of the last acts by the outgoing President Obama was to commute Chelsea's sentence.

Afri continued to support the Erris Community in Mayo. In 2014 a series of 'Airing Erris' episodes were held with contributions from Donal O'Kelly, Harry Browne, Betty Purcell, Liam MacNally, Ed Vulliamy, Gemma O'Doherty, Margaretta D'Arcy and Garda Whistle-blower John Wilson. These events provided a space to allow the community to get the real story of what was happening there out to a wider audience and it was live-streamed by film-maker Richie O'Donnell. In 2015 Afri organised a visit by Michael Lapsley, anti-apartheid activist and founder of the Institute for the Healing of Memories. Sadly, the gas pipe line was pushed through by use of brute force and in 2016 the gas started flowing.

Afri continued to raise awareness about the dangers of fracking and launched Dearbhla Glynn's short film about fracking in Ireland in Manorhamilton, as well as initiating a petition to ban fracking in Ireland in 2014. In 2015 Afri worked with LAMP (an anti-fracking group in Fermanagh) and Dearbhla Glynn to create a second film about the dangers of fracking with a focus specifically on Northern Ireland. In 2017 a ban on fracking in the Republic of Ireland was secured.

In 2015 Afri celebrating its 40th Anniversary in style with a special 40th anniversary edition of Peacemaker and 'Afriendship Gathering' inviting Afri supporters to celebrate 40 years of working for justice, peace and human rights. In addition, Joe Murray hosted former (and current) members of the Afri board at an enjoyable gathering in his home.

In 2015 Afri focused on climate change in the run up to the Climate Conference in Paris and issued a call to artist to awaken their supporters to the urgency of this issue. Artists such as Damien Dempsey, Liam Ó Maonlaí, Donal O'Kelly, Paula Meehan and more responded. We also made a short film featuring the students from Gaelscoil Cholmcille singing and dancing to Pete St. John's song 'Waltzing on Borrowed Time'. Later that year, in partnership with the students in Mount Temple, another film was made calling on world leaders to take action to tackle climate change. Another significant moment took place in 2015 when Joe Murray flew to Timor Leste to accept an award from the Timorese government on behalf of the East Timor Ireland Solidarity Campaign.

Afri kicked off the 'Famine Landscape Project' in 2015 which built on our work in relation to the famine by organising a number of additional Famine Walks in Donegal, Derry and Sligo and a walk in Dublin in 2016. This work was supported by Concern. In 2017 Afri launched 'Music from a Dark Lake' - an 18 track CD by some of Ireland's greatest artists, all of whom performed at the Famine Walk. This is available to buy from Afri.

In 2016 Afri was involved in a variety of solidarity events - taking part in 'Reclaim the Vision of 2016' in April, marking Bloomsday (not Bombsday - in protest at the revelations contained in the Panama papers - a giant leak of financial and legal records exploring financial crime and corruption, concealed in off-shore accounts!) and organising events to mark the 10th anniversary of the acquittal of the Pitstop Ploughshares in July and an 'anti-war activism in the Trump era' event in November.

Increasingly, Afri's work has diversified to include, as well as climate change, militarism and hunger, issues such as the global refugee crisis and the perils of corporatism in the guise of trade deals such as CETA.



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